

## Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /006 R

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DRAFTED BY AFR/CWR/SDU JKELLY

APPROVED BY AFR/CWR DSHEAR

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ROME IMMEDIATE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE STATE 117876

AFDROUGHT FOR METTAM

FOLLOWING REPEAT COTONOU 656 ACTION SECSTATE ABIDJAN

BAMKAKO INFO ACCRA LOME NIAMEY MAY 19

QUOTE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE COTONOU 656

AF DROUGHT

EO 11652: NA

SUBJ: COTONOU-GAO SHIPMENT

FROM FOR FOGAD

REF A. STATE 115059 B. BAMAKO 1804 C. COTONOU 635 D. STATE 113870

COTONOU 627 F. COTONOU 589

1. AIDOFF COTONOU SPENT 16 MAY IN ROUND OF MEETINGS IN WHICH  
FFPO PEARSON, CONTRACT OFFICER NEVIN, WFP REP EYBEN, MALIAN  
FREIGHT FORWARDER DRAMANE DIAWARA, DAHOMEAN RAILWAY (OCDN)  
DIR DOREGO, AND REPS OF LOCAL FREIGHT FORWARDERS SOCOPAO  
AND SACOTRA ALL PARTICIPATED AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER. AS A  
RESULT OF THESE DISCUSSIONS CURRENT SITUATION COTONOU MAY BE  
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CHARACTERIZED AS FOLLOWS:

2. TERMS AND PROCEDURES OF CONTRACT HAVE BEEN AGEED UPON  
WITH THE LOEST PRICED LOCAL FREIGHT FORWARDER TO HANDLE UP

TO 6000 MT GAO SORGHUM. THE CONTRACT (DETAILS FOLLOW SEPTTEL) HAS BEEN SIGNED BY NEVIN AND IS BEING HELD BY AIDOFF FOR POSSIBLE SIGNATURE BY LOCAL FREIGHT FORWARDER IF SO INSTRUCTED.

3. DIAWARA HAS REQUESTED TEN DAYS TO STUDY POSSIBILITIES OF ASSEMBLING A FLEET OF MALIAN TRUCKS AND REACHING AGREEMENT AMONG GOVTS OF MAIL, NIGER AND DAHOMEY ON USE OF MALIAN TRUCKS TO TRANSPORT SORGHUM FROM PARAKOU/COTONOU TO GAO. HE PREFERS TO HANDLE ENTIRE OPERATION HIMSELF ON CONTRACT FROM US, AND TO SUBCONTRACT FOR LOCAL SERVICES, SUCH AS CUSTOMS CLEARANCES, AS NECESSARY. CONSIDERING COMPLEXITY OF SITUATION, DIAWARA'S REQUEST FOR TIME TO WORK OUT DETAILS AND MAKE OFFER REASONABLE; ANTICIPATE NO DETRIMENTAL EFFECTS FROM HAVING LOCAL FREIGHT FORWARDER SIGN CONTRACT TEN DAYS LATER RATHER THAN NOW SHOULD DIAWARA'S PROPOSAL PROVE UNACCEPTABLE. HE HAS PROMISED TO PRESENT THIS PROPOSAL TO AIDOFF BY 26 MAY, WHO WILL IMMEDIATELY THEREAFTER INFORM ADDRESSEES OF CONTENTS. IF PROPOSAL MERITS FURTHER CONSIDERATION, NEVIN MIGHT COME TO COTONOU OR DIAWARA (AND AIDOFF IF DESIRED) MIGHT GO TO ABIDJAN TO CONCLUDE CONTRACT.

4. DIAWARA WAS THINKING IN TERMS OF TRANSPORTING FIRST SHIPMENT FROM ABIDJAN AND SUBSEQUENT SHIPMENTS FROM COTONOU. THEREFORE, REQUEST THAT CDO BAMAKO TELL DIAWARA IMMEDIATELY THAT, PER REF A, THIS OPTION NO LONGER EXISTS. PLEASE INFORM WHEN DIAWARA IN POSSESSION OF THIS INFO.

5. ALSO REQUEST BAMAKO PROVIDE FURTHER ASSESSMENT OF DIAWARA'S RELIABILITY AND CAPACITY. IF HE SAYS HE CAN OBTAIN AND OPERATE 50 TRUCKS FOR TWO MONTHS A THOUSAND KILOMETERS FROM HOME BASE, IS IT LIKELY THAT HE CAN DELIVER? WHEN HE CLAIMS HE CAN HAVE THE PRES OF MALI CONTACT THE PRES OF DAHOMEY TO ELIMINATE POLITICAL OBSTACLES, DOES HE HAVE THE POLITICAL WEIGHT, PERHAPS THROUGH HIS BROTHER, TO LEND CREDENCE TO THESE CLAIMS? IF ANSWER TO THESE QUESTIONS IN NEGATIVE, DIAWARA'S OFFER MAY BE MEANINGLESS, AND TO AWAIT IS POINTLESS. IN ANY CASE, SUGGEST THAT INITIAL CONTRACT WITH DIAWARA BE FOR ONLY FIRST SHIPLOAD WITH SUBSEQUENT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ENT SHIPMENTS DEPENDENT ON DIAWARA'S PERFORMANCE ON FIRST TRANCHE.

6. MEETINGS WITH EYBEN AND DOREGO IN SAME VIEWN AS PREVIOUS DISCUSSIONS. EYBEN SAID THAT HE WAS WEIGHT HIS WORDS CAREFULLY WHEN HE DESCRIBED LAST YEAR'S SITUATION AS SERIOUS AND THIS YEAR'S AS CATASTROPHIC. HE SAID 30 PERCENT OF THE RAIL CAPACITY WAS DOWN FOR REPAIRS, AND ANOTHER THIRD MISSING. DOREGO SAID THAT MISSING RAILCARS WERE BEING HELD BY FREIGHT FORWARDERS AND THAT A LETTER HE SENT TO THEM ON MAY 12 WOULD SOLVE ALL OF OCDN'S PROBLEMS BY PLACING A 40 PERCENT SURCHARGE ON RAIL TARIFFS IF WAGONS NOT LOADED AND PRESENTED FOR SHIP-

MENT 48 HOURS AFTER RECEIVED BY FORWARDERS AND A 100 PERCENT PENALTY IF RAILCARS HELD BY FORWARDERS MORE THAN 72 HOURS. EVERY TIME WE TALK TO DOREGO, HE HAS A SOLUTION TO OUR PROBLEMS, AND HIS LATEST ONE SHOULD HELP BUT IS NO PANACEA. LAST WEEK'S PERFORMANCE FIGURES WHICH AIDOFF EXPECTS TO SEND MAY 21 SHOULD PROVIDE MEASURE OF INITIAL EFFECTS OF THESE NEW MEASURES.

7. EYBEN SHOWN PARA 1 A-C STATE 093126 PER INSTRUCTIONS REF D. HE STILL PLANS TO SUGGEST THAT OSRO RECOMMEND DIVERSION. HE INFORMS THAT HE NOW EXPECTS 1500 MT FED POWDERED MILK IN JUNE AND SAYS THAT MILK ALWAYS TAKES SHIPPING PRIORITY OVER ALL OTHER COMMODITIES.

8. RE TRUCKING AVAILABILITY QUERY PARA 4 REF A; LOCAL AND NIGERIAN TRUCKING CAPACITY ENGAGED IN LUCRATIVE NIGERIA TRAFFIC NOW REPORTEDLY RUNNING IN EXCESS 100 TRUCKS PER DAY. PER WEEKLY REPORTS, VERY FEW TRUCKS FROM NIGER MAKE IT DOWN TO COTONOU. PROVISION OF NIGER TRUCKS TO HANDLE EVEN LIMITED GOODS REACHING PARAKOU IS UNEVEN. LOCAL FEELING IS THAT NIGER IS UTILIZING ITS TRUCKING CAPACITY DOMESTICALLY AND HAS LITTLE TO SPARE FOR PICKING UP GOODS IN DAHOMEY. THIS JUDGMENT IS INCONSISTENT WITH REPORTED EAGERNESS, REF E, OF NIGER TO MOVE GOODS FROM DAHOMEY. PEARSON WILL INVESTIGATE THIS MATTER FROM NIAMEY LATER THIS WEEK. FROM LACK OF RESPONSE TO REQUEST MADE PARA 4, REF C AND PARA 6 REF F, FOR TRUCKS FROM NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES, ASSUME THAT THIS POSSIBILITY UNFEASIBLE. ENGLE UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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